

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 737

By Rudd

A RESOLUTION to honor Harry L. Shumate, Sr., on the occasion of his ninety-fifth birthday.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom; and

WHEREAS, Harry L. Shumate, Sr., is one such estimable individual, whose remarkable career in aviation proved invaluable to the United States Armed Forces and made an indelible mark on aviation in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Shumate will celebrate his ninety-fifth birthday on March 12, 2022, an occasion to be commemorated as yet another souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, born in Port Huron, Michigan, on March 12, 1927, Harry Shumate took his first plane ride at the age of three, an experience made possible by his father, an aircraft engine mechanic; and

WHEREAS, with his passion thus ignited and the seeds of his destiny thus planted, a precocious and capable fifteen-year-old Harry Shumate joined the Civil Air Patrol; following this foundational training, he took his first flying lessons at the age of sixteen; and

WHEREAS, the following year, Mr. Shumate joined the U.S. Army Air Corps Reserve as an Aviation Cadet; with World War II efforts winding down, he was given the rank of private and sent to Keesler Field Army Base in Mississippi for basic training, thereafter receiving an assignment at the aircraft sheet metal technical school at Chanute Field, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, after three weeks of technical school, he was assigned to Bad Kissingen, Germany, as a replacement for the occupation forces; following his discharge at the rank of Corporal in December 1946, he made the decision to remain in the Reserve while concurrently attending Port Huron Junior College and obtaining his private pilot license; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1948, Harry Shumate enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, signing up for the Aviation Cadet program; he was assigned to Class 50-E at Randolph AFB, Texas, in May 1950 and graduated in the top ten percent of his class in September of that year; and

WHEREAS, after an assignment with the 93rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Kirkland AFB, New Mexico, where he trained veteran pilots returning from Korea who had no F-86 experience, he himself was sent to Korea in November 1951; during this time, due to his exceptional combat skills, Mr. Shumate often had the honor of being selected as the wingman for the top fighter pilots; and

WHEREAS, Harry Shumate flew twenty-six combat missions in Korea, with his last coming on May 13, 1952, when he was flying Element Lead and encountered enemy forces; he was heavily outnumbered, and when his aircraft took a hit, he made a harrowing escape by ejecting over the Yellow Sea; and

WHEREAS, he thereafter completed assignments in Michigan, California, Florida, Arizona, and Iceland, rising through the ranks and being upgraded to ADC Expert Weapons Controller, which, in addition to his Expert Fighter Interceptor Pilot designation, gave him the rare distinction of double expert; and

WHEREAS, perhaps his most noteworthy military contribution was his service during the Cuban Missile Crisis; in April 1961, he was placed in charge of the kickoff of Operation "Southern Tip" for possible invasion of the United States by Cuba; he was flying a fully armed F-106 aircraft on combat patrol when he intercepted a Russian aircraft carrying high-ranking officials and escorted the plane until it began its descent into Havana; and

WHEREAS, during his twenty-four years of exemplary military service, Harry Shumate helped ensure our nation's safety and sovereignty and greatly contributed to the readiness of a variety of military organizations and installations; for his astute service, he was duly awarded twenty-one medals and ribbons, chief among them the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters,

the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and the USAF Commendation Medal;
and

WHEREAS, Harry Shumate was selected for promotion to Lt. Colonel in 1967 but chose instead to retire; he and his family then settled in Chattanooga, where he joined Atlas Chemical Company as a safety inspector at the ammunition plant; and

WHEREAS, after serving as chief pilot for the local Piper aircraft dealer at Lovell Field, Mr. Shumate became the Pilot Airport Licensor and Inspector with the Tennessee Bureau of Aeronautics, with the primary role of flying the Governor and his staff; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Shumate held this position for thirteen years, serving as pilot for Governors Winfield Dunn, Ray Blanton, and Lamar Alexander and future-Governor Ned McWherter; during this time, he improved and maintained flying safety and operations and increased the functionality of general aviation regional airports, thus greatly expanding business within the State; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor this exceptional public servant and human being on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend our best wishes to Harry L. Shumate, Sr., on the occasion of his ninety-fifth birthday, wishing him many happy returns of the day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.